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Teachers Union Frantic Over Voucher Decision NEA to 'tackle' Supreme Court Ruling

WASHINGTON, DC — In a 5-4 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court on June 27 ruled in favor of Cleveland, Ohio's voucher program, which awards \$2,500 each to approximately 4,000 poor children to transfer from failing public schools to private schools. The teachers unions and their allies, including the national PTA, immediately denounced the decision as trampling on the First Amendment and endangering the separation of church and state.

Both outgoing NEA President Bob Chase and AFT President Sandra Feldman vowed that their unions would continue the fight against vouchers, and Chase promised the NEA would "tackle" the Supreme Court ruling. "We anticipate voucher proponents will now work on seven to eight states," he warned. "If that happens, NEA is prepared to assist state affiliates in any way we can."

During his keynote address at the NEA's national convention on July 2, Chase called "the voucher crowd's" contention that public education has failed "the big

lie." Just seconds earlier, he had described the convention's host city of Dallas as "one of 16 cities nationwide where at least half the high schools have extremely high dropout rates — 50% or worse." He complained that after tax cuts, defense spending and aid to farmers, there is "no new money left for public education and struggling schools," despite the record \$26.5 billion authorized for public education by Congress in January under the "No Child Left Behind" Act. (It was \$4 bil-

lion more than President Bush requested and \$8 billion more than the last Clinton education bill.)

Incoming NEA President Reg Weaver parroted the union hard line on vouchers when he addressed the convention on July 5, asking "what steps are we going to take to diminish the negative impact of what, to many, will be perceived as a great gift, and that is vouchers?"

Cleveland parents who have seized vouchers as lifelines for their children may (See *Decision*, page 2)



Buttons worn at the 2002 Convention of the National Education Association, which sometimes claims it is nonpartisan.

NEA Votes on Flood of NBIs

DALLAS, TX — NEA delegates considered 109 (mostly political, wacky or frivolous) New Business Items (NBIs) during the union's annual convention July 2-5, compared to 77 last year.

A few of the NBIs that passed include:

- ◆ **NBI 5** directs the NEA to address the Vast Right Wing Conspiracy by providing "ongoing strategic information to members and affiliates that increase member knowledge of the ongoing attacks designed to destroy NEA and its affiliates, limit educators' freedom of speech and their right to political participation." This information should include "Identification and history of individuals and organizations that support the attacks and sources of funds that support these attack efforts"; "status reports on tactics used by attack groups at the local, state, and national levels"; "status reports on responses by NEA and its affiliates to deal with the attacks."

In 1998, the NEA released a 144-page report describing an alleged "Conservative Network" of "far right" organizations which it claimed were carrying out "a state-by-state assault on public education." The report implicated dozens of individuals and organizations and included a flow chart. (See *Education Reporter*, December 1998.)

- ◆ **NBI 67** authorizes the NEA to sponsor a "national seminar colloquium on bilingual education" to "develop mutual strategies for dealing with the English-only movement." The Education Intelligence Agency's (EIA) July 5 *Conventional Wisdom* warns that "before anyone gets the idea that this will be a bal-

anced examination of various approaches to limited-English instruction, its originator, David Hernandez of California, put the notion to rest by telling delegates that NEA needs a national campaign" to counter English immersion initiatives approved in California and Arizona and similar measures pending in Colorado and Massachusetts.

- ◆ **NBI 57** directs the NEA president to "appoint a committee on early childhood education." This committee is to prepare a report that includes a recommendation about whether and to what extent NEA "should attempt to organize and represent early childhood employees." The committee's report is due early next year. (See *NEA Membership Declines*, at right.)

- ◆ **NBI 27** urges the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold affirmative action and encourages union members to circulate a petition to "Support Affirmative Action" before the court.

- ◆ **NBI A** authorizes the creation of an Advisory Committee to develop "a comprehensive strategy for fully funding and, as appropriate, amending the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)." The union is seeking to repeal ESEA's testing and funding provisions that are contrary to NEA resolutions.

- ◆ **NBI 24** directs the NEA to consider legal action, including "filing suitable plaintiffs," to force full federal funding of costs associated with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Some experts predict that if fully funded, this law (currently up for reau-

(See *NBIs*, page 2)

NEA Membership Declines Will early childhood workers fill gap?

DALLAS, TX — NEA's *Strategic Plan and Budget* for fiscal years 2002-2004, distributed to delegates at the union's annual convention in July, projects a full-time membership increase of just 9,000 for 2003-2004. Page 39 of the booklet promises assistance from the national union to state affiliates "experiencing challenges related to membership recruitment and retention."

In its *Conventional Wisdom* report dated July 1, the Education Intelligence Agency (EIA) stated that last year's NEA active member increase of more than 81,000 was largely due to state affiliate mergers with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) in Florida and Montana. NEA membership figures published by EIA for last year (excluding student, substitute and retired members) show a decline in 22 states, from a slight decrease of 0.1% in Alabama to a more sizeable slide of 8.8% in Washington, DC and 10.5% in Mississippi.

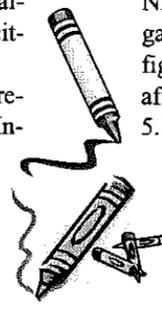
The flattening of NEA's membership figures in recent years and the modest growth projection for next year may be an indication that the presence of organizations such as the Association of Ameri-

can Educators (AAE) are beginning to be felt. The AAE now has more members than the NEA affiliates in three states: Georgia, Missouri and Texas. According to AAE Executive Director Gary Beckner, the organization's chapter in Mississippi is "dead even" in membership with the NEA affiliate, and AAE is closing the gap in Louisiana. (EIA's membership figures show that the Louisiana NEA affiliate's membership was also down 5.1% last year.)

Early Childhood Push

These membership figures may have some bearing on the NEA's decision to explore the possibility of organizing early childhood workers, which would add a swell of new dues-paying members to help fund the union's political causes and activities.

The booklet, *Advancing NEA's Legislative Program, July 2002*, advocates early childhood programs and recommends the allocation of "federal resources to support early childhood education programs that are school based, school linked, or established with formal partnerships with community-based organizations."



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well consider them "a great gift." "The parents of these children are among the happiest people in the world today," opined nationally syndicated radio host and columnist Neal Boortz on June 28. "Their children aren't going to be yanked from their private schools and forced back into the black hole of government education from which no knowledge can escape."

NEA attorney Robert Chanin, who argued against vouchers before the Supreme Court, admitted that "this legal challenge was never our first line of defense. The First Amendment argument was a means to an end. . . . Voucher programs will only worsen whatever people might think is wrong with public education."

Some voucher supporters called the ruling a "landmark" decision. Others speculated that it might be the most important education decision since school prayer was banned by *Engel v. Vitale* in 1962. "The Supreme Court upheld the Cleveland school option plan as 'a program of true private choice,' even though the majority of voucher-using parents

chose religiously affiliated schools," noted constitutional lawyer and Eagle Forum President Phyllis Schlafly.

Mrs. Schlafly observed that "in watching the tantrums indulged in" by the teachers unions and other voucher opponents, "their principal argument is not First Amendment but financial. They are squealing because school choice plans divert a tiny fraction of public funds to private schools 'that are not accountable to the public.' Public schools are currently accountable only to the political bureaucracy that the unions control. Private schools are accountable to the parents who pay the tuition and can withdraw their children if the schooling isn't satisfactory."

As Neal Boortz pointed out, "parents are going to demand of their state legislators the opportunity to use the money that has been taken from them in the form of school taxes for the actual education of their children, not just the lining of teachers union pockets. The unions know that this ruling is going to open a floodgate of voucher legislation."



NEA Convention Briefs

Classroom "conversations" about gays? NEA delegates approved new language for Resolution I-39, Elimination of Discrimination, at its July convention. The revised version changes "sexual orientation" to "sexual orientation/gender identification," and adds this new paragraph: "The national Education Association believes that honest and open conversation is a precursor to change. The Association encourages its members and all other members of the educational community to engage in courageous conversations in order to examine assumptions, prejudices, discriminatory practices, and their effects."

Legislative Program supports federal employment discrimination law. The NEA's lobbying efforts will now include support for a federal law "prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation/gender identification." Such a sweeping law at the federal level

could have serious consequences for religious organizations and small business owners.

Both this change and the revisions to Resolution I-39 are a result of the NEA Board's adoption in February 2002 of the Report of the NEA Task Force On Sexual Orientation. Also on tap are the establishment of an Advisory Committee on Sexual Orientation/Gender Identification and the awarding of official observer status to gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered persons at NEA Board and Executive Committee meetings.

Lobbying efforts include support for U.N. treaties. Long a supporter of the United Nations, the NEA's Legislative Program for 2002 urges U.S. ratification of controversial U.N. treaties including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

'Diversity' Doesn't Include PFOX Ex-gay group files sexual orientation complaint

WASHINGTON, DC — Parents and Friends Of Ex-gays (PFOX) has filed a sexual orientation discrimination complaint with the District of Columbia's Office of Human Rights against the NEA for its refusal to lease the group an exhibit booth at the union's annual convention in Dallas. PFOX is a nonprofit Christian group that assists individuals attempting to leave the homosexual lifestyle and supports families affected by homosexuality.

Each year, the NEA allows a variety of organizations and vendors to exhibit their materials and wares at its convention, including pro-gay groups.

PFOX applied to the union last March for an exhibit booth. Two months after cashing its deposit check, NEA Conference Coordinator Thomasine Williams sent PFOX a letter (dated June 10) denying permission for the booth and claiming that exhibit space was "completely sold out." An anonymous June 7 call by PFOX to CEPI Inc., NEA's outside contractor for exhibit booths, revealed that two booths were in fact still available and that additional space was expected due to last-minute cancellations.

"NEA rejected our application on the basis of sexual orientation discrimination, but is hiding behind a 'sorry, all sold out' excuse," PFOX spokeswoman Regina Griggs stated. "It seems the NEA has violated its own resolutions against sexual orientation discrimination."

At a press conference during the convention, a reporter asked outgoing NEA President Bob Chase why PFOX had been denied a booth to distribute materials that promote equal opportunity and an inclusive environment for ex-gays. Chase responded that the NEA is "a private orga-

nization and can deny whomever we choose."

This reporter stated that the NEA has created a "standing committee" on sexual orientation, which "etches in stone" the union's support and promotion of pro-gay instruction incorporated into all public school curricula and activities.

New Business Item (NBI) 62 introduced at this year's convention urged that all NEA and Health Information Network (HIN) publications related to gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender issues "consider the needs and problems of ex-gays and those with un-



wanted same-sex attraction in providing information and listing resources such as the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality, Exodus International, Living Waters, Parents and Friends Of Ex-gays, and others. The NEA will provide equal opportunity and an inclusive environment for ex-gays and those with unwanted same-sex attraction." The rationale given for NBI 62 was that the "NEA's diversity policies don't protect inalienable rights (pursuit of happiness) for those with unwanted same-sex attraction."

The convention voted *not* to consider NBI 62. The NEA's pro-gay resolutions support homosexuality as both normal and unchangeable, and its publication called *Just the Facts About Sexual Orientation and Youth* states that "reparative therapy" and "transformational" ministries provide "treatments" that may cause harm." *Just the Facts* suggests that the efforts of such groups "in a school-related context could raise constitutional problems" regarding the separation of church and state.

NBIs (Continued from page 1)

thorization before Congress) would increase exponentially the "already frightening level of child psychiatric labeling and drugging." These experts recommend "a rollback to IDEA's pre-1991 language," which would remove the incentive for such labeling by making mental and emotional disorders ineligible for special education funding.

◆ **NBI 25** "commences an initiative" to "refocus attention" on "qualities and skills (creativity, critical thinking, compassion, etc.)" that the NEA believes students need "to become productive and engaged citizens." This NBI will "determine whether current tests/or testing procedures measure these skills" or whether they "inhibit the learning" of "skills and behaviors" the

NEA deems important.

◆ **NBI 109** authorizes the NEA to provide members with information "about how they can organize to oppose any trade agreement that would move towards privatization of education."

The NEA opposes the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) which it claims "threatens to privatize public education throughout the Americas and expand harmful environmental and labor deregulation of NAFTA."

◆ **NBI 8** directs the NEA to "review the research on the environmental impact of chalk dust on children, teachers and support personnel in the classroom," noting that "breathing chalk dust may be associated with respiratory illnesses."

NEA vocal on voucher ruling, silent on pledge. While NEA officials attacked the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on the Cleveland voucher program, they had no comment about the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeal's decision declaring the Pledge

of Allegiance unconstitutional in public schools. During the ceremonial reciting of the pledge at the opening of the NEA convention, however, some of the 8,500+ delegates made their feelings known by loudly shouting "under God!"

Some NEA Resolutions Passed at 2002 Convention in Dallas



A-2. Educational Opportunity for all. The National Education Association believes that each student has the right to a free public education that should be suited to the needs of the individual and guaranteed by state constitutions and the U.S. Constitution. The Association also believes that all schools must be accredited under uniform standards established by the appropriate agencies in collaboration with the Association and its affiliates.

A-11. Use of Closed Public School Buildings. The Association believes that closed public school buildings should be sold or leased only to those organizations that do not provide direct educational services to students and/or are not in direct competition with public schools.

A-14. Financial Support of Public Education. Tax revision favorable to public education should be encouraged and continually reviewed at every governmental level. Funds must be provided for programs to alleviate race, gender, and sexual orientation discrimination and to eliminate portrayal of race, gender, and sexual orientation stereotypes in the public schools. The Association opposes providing any public revenues to sectarian pre-K through 12 schools.

A-15. Federal Financial Support of Public Education. The Association believes that funding for federal programs should be substantially increased, not merely redistributed among states. The Association opposes any federal legislation, laws, or regulations that provide funds, goods, or services to sectarian schools. . . nonsectarian private schools or nonpublic school students in pre-K through 12 education unless those funds, goods, or services are used for educational services that are not available in public schools.

A-24. Voucher Plans and Tuition Tax Credits. The National Education Association believes that voucher plans, tuition tax credits, or other funding arrangements that use tax monies to subsidize pre-K through 12 private school education can undermine public education, reduce the support needed to fund public education adequately, weaken the wall of separation between church and state, and cause racial, economic, and social segregation of students. The Association opposes voucher plans, tuition tax credits, or other such funding arrangements that pay for students to attend sectarian schools.

A-30. Charter and Nontraditional Public School Options. The Association believes that when concepts such as charter schools and other nontraditional schools options are proposed, all affected public education employees must be directly involved in the design, implemen-

tation, and governance of these programs.

A-31. Federally or State-Mandated Choice/Parental Option Plans. The National Education Association believes that [these] plans compromise free, equitable, universal, and quality public education for every student. Therefore, the Association opposes such federally or state-mandated choice or parental option plans.

B-1. Early Childhood Education. The National Education Association supports early childhood education programs in the public schools for children from birth through age eight. The Association also supports a high-quality program of transition from home and/or preschool to the public kindergarten or first grade. This transition should include communication and cooperation among parents/guardians, the preschool staff, and the public school staff. The Association also believes that early childhood education programs should include a full continuum of services for parents/guardians and children, including child care, child development, developmentally appropriate and diversity-based curricula, special education, and appropriate bias-free screening devices. The Association believes that federal legislation should be enacted to assist in organizing the implementation of fully funded early childhood education programs offered through the public schools. These programs must be available to all children on an equal basis and should include mandatory kindergarten with compulsory attendance.

B-6. Class Size. The National Education Association believes that excellence in the classroom can best be attained by small class size. The Association also believes in an optimum class size of fifteen students in regular programs and a proportionately lower number in programs for students with exceptional needs.

B-7. Diversity. The National Education Association believes that a diverse society enriches all individuals. Similarities and differences among races, ethnicity, color, national origin, language, geographic location, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, size, occupation, and marital, parental, or economic status form the fabric of a society. The Association also believes that education should foster the values of appreciation and acceptance of the various qualities that pertain to people as individuals and as members of diverse populations. The Association further believes in the importance of observances, programs and curricula that accurately portray and recognize the roles, contributions, cultures, and history of these diverse groups and individuals.

B-9. Racism, Sexism, and Sexual Orientation Discrimination. Discrimina-

tion and stereotyping based on such factors as race, gender, immigration status, physical disabilities, ethnicity, occupation, and sexual orientation must be eliminated. Plans, activities, and programs must —

- ◆ Increase respect, understanding, acceptance, and sensitivity toward individuals and groups in a diverse society composed of such groups as American Indians/Alaska natives, Asians and Pacific Islanders, Blacks, Hispanics, women, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered people, and people with disabilities.

- ◆ Eliminate discrimination and stereotyping in curricula, textbooks, resource and instructional materials, activities, etc.

- ◆ Foster the dissemination and use of nondiscriminatory and nonstereotypical language, resources, practices, and activities.

- ◆ Integrate an accurate portrayal of the roles and contributions of all groups throughout history across curricula, particularly groups who have been underrepresented historically

- ◆ Eliminate subtle practices that favor the education of one student over another on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, physical disabilities, or sexual orientation

- ◆ Encourage all members of the educational community to examine assumptions and prejudices, including, but not limited to, racism, sexism, and homophobia, that might limit the opportunities and growth of students and education employees

- ◆ Offer positive and diverse role models in our society including the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of diverse education employees in our public schools

- ◆ Coordinate with organizations and concerned agencies that promote the contributions, heritage, culture, history, and special health and care needs of diverse population groups

- ◆ Promote a safe and inclusive environment for all.

The Association encourages its affiliates to develop and implement training programs on these matters.

B-17. Education of Refugee Children and Children of Undocumented Immigrants. The National Education Association believes that, regardless of the immigration status of students or their parents, every student has the right to a free public education in an environment free from harassment.

B-22. Educational Programs for Limited English Proficiency Students. The Association believes that LEP students should be placed in bilingual education programs to receive instruction in their native language from qualified teachers until such time as English proficiency is achieved.

B-31. Multicultural Education. The National Education Association believes that multiculturalism is the process of

valuing differences and incorporating the values identified into behavior for the goal of achieving the common good. Multicultural education should promote the recognition of individual and group differences and similarities in order to reduce racism, homophobia, ethnic and all other forms of prejudice and to develop self-esteem as well as respect for others.

B-34. School-to-Work/Career Education. Career education must be interwoven into the total educational system and should include programs in gender-free career awareness and exploration to aid students in career course selection.

B-39. Family Life Education. The Association believes that programs should be established for both students and parents/guardians and supported at all educational levels to promote —

- ◆ The development of self-esteem
- ◆ Understanding of societal issues and problems related to children, spouses, parents/guardians, domestic partners, older generation family members, and other family members.

The Association also believes that education in these areas must be presented as part of an anti-biased, culturally-sensitive program.

B-40. Sex Education. The Association recognizes that the public school must assume an increasingly important role in providing the instruction. Teachers and health professionals must be qualified to teach in this area and must be legally protected from censorship and lawsuits. The Association also believes that to facilitate the realization of human potential, it is the right of every individual to live in an environment of freely available information and knowledge about sexuality and encourages affliated members to support appropriately established sex education programs. Such programs should include information on sexual abstinence, birth control and family planning, diversity of culture, diversity of sexual orientation, parenting skills, prenatal care, sexually transmitted diseases, incest, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, homophobia.

B-41. HIV/AIDS Education. The National Education Association believes that educational institutions should establish comprehensive acquired human immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) education programs as an integral part of the school curriculum.

B-43. Environmental Education. The Association supports educational programs that promote —

- ◆ An awareness of the effects of past, present, and future population growth patterns on world civilization, human survival, and the environment

(Continued on page 4)

◆ Solutions to such problems as pollution, global warming, ozone depletion, and acid precipitation and deposition
 ◆ The recognition of and participation in such activities as Earth Day.

B-49. Education on Peace and International Understanding. The National Education Association believes that educational strategies for teaching peace should include the role of international and nongovernmental organizations. The Association also believes that educational materials should include activities dealing with the effects of nuclear weaponry and other weapons of mass destruction, strategies for disarmament, and methods to achieve peace.

B-54. Conflict Resolution Education. The National Education Association supports the adoption and use, at all educational levels, of proven conflict-resolution strategies, materials, and activities by school districts, education employees, students, parents/guardians, and the school community to encourage nonviolent resolution of interpersonal and societal conflicts.

B-57. Standardized Testing of Students. The National Education Association believes that standardized tests should only be used to improve the quality of education and instruction for students. The Association opposes the use of standardized tests when —

- ◆ Used as the criterion for the reduction or withholding of any educational funding
- ◆ Results are used to compare students, teachers, programs, schools, communities, and states.

B-69. Home Schooling. The National Education Association believes that home schooling programs cannot provide the student with a comprehensive education experience. When home schooling occurs, students enrolled must meet all state requirements. Instruction should be by persons who are licensed by the appropriate state education licensure agency, and a curriculum approved by the state department of education should be used. The Association also believes that home-schooled students should not participate in any extracurricular activities in the public schools.

C-15. Extremist Groups. The National Education Association condemns the philosophy and practices of extremist groups and urges active opposition to all such movements that are inimical to the ideals of the Association.

C-23. Comprehensive School Health, Social and Psychological Programs and Services. The National Education Association believes that every child should have direct and confidential access to comprehensive health, social, and psychological programs and services. The Association believes that programs in the schools should provide —

- ◆ A planned sequential, pre-K through 12 health education curriculum that integrates various health topics (such as drug abuse, violence, safety issues, universal

precautions, and HIV education). The Association believes that services in the schools should include —

- ◆ Counseling programs that provide developmental guidance and broad-based interventions and referrals
- ◆ Comprehensive school-based, community-funded student health care clinics that provide basic health care services (which may include diagnosis and treatment)
- ◆ If deemed appropriate by local choice, family-planning counseling and access to birth control methods with instruction in their use.

C-24. School Guidance and Counseling Programs. The National Education Association believes that guidance and counseling programs should be integrated into the entire education system, pre-K through college.

C-28. Student Sexual Orientation. The National Education Association believes that all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, should be afforded equal opportunity and guaranteed a safe and inclusive environment within the public education system. The Association also believes that, for students who are struggling with their sexual/gender orientation, every school district and educational institution should provide counseling services and programs that deal with high suicide and dropout rates and the high incidence of teen prostitution.

C-30. Suicide Prevention Programs. The National Education Association believes that suicide prevention programs including prevention, intervention, and postvention must be developed and implemented. The Association urges its affiliates to ensure that these programs are an integral part of the school program.

D-8. Hiring Policies and Practices for Teaching Positions. The National Education Association believes that hiring policies and practices must be nondiscriminatory and include provisions for the recruitment of a diverse teaching staff.

D-21. Competency Testing of Licensed Teachers. The National Education Association believes that competency testing must not be used as a condition of employment, license retention, evaluation, placement, ranking, or promotion of licensed teachers.

E-3. Selection and Challenges of Materials and Teaching Techniques. The Association deplores prepublishing censorship, book-burning crusades, and attempts to ban books from school libraries/media centers and school curricula.

E-9. Academic and Professional Freedom. Academic freedom includes the rights of teachers and learners to explore and discuss divergent points of view. A teacher shall not be fired, transferred, or removed from his or her position for refusing to suppress the free expression rights of others.

F-1. Nondiscriminatory Personnel Policies/Affirmative Action. The National Education Association believes that per-

sonnel policies and practices must guarantee that no person be employed, retained, paid, dismissed, suspended, demoted, transferred, retired or harassed because of race, color, national origin, cultural diversity, accent, religious beliefs, residence, physical disability, political activities, professional association activity, age, size, marital status, family relationship, gender, or sexual orientation. Affirmative action plans and procedures that encourage active recruitment and employment of ethnic minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and men in under-represented education categories should be developed and implemented.

F-44. Medication and Medical Services in the Schools. The National Education Association believes that procedures should be established for students who must use prescribed medication or who need other medical services during school hours. The Association also believes that education employees who are not licensed medical personnel should be protected from all liability if they are required to administer medication or perform medical services.

H-1. The Education Employee as a Citizen. The Association urges its members to become politically involved and to support the political action committees of the Association and its affiliates.

H-7. National Health Care Policy. The Association supports the adoption of a single-payer health care plan for all residents of the United States, its territories, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

I-1. Peace and International Relations. The Association urges all nations to develop treaties and disarmament agreements that reduce the possibility of war. The Association also believes that such treaties and agreements should prevent the placement of weapons in outer space. The Association further believes that the United Nations (UN) furthers world peace and promotes the rights of all people by preventing war, racism, and genocide. The Association supports the U.S. Institute of Peace, which provides publications, information, programs, training, and research data in developing peacemaking and conflict resolution skills.

I-2. International Court of Justice. The Association urges participation by the United States in deliberations before the court.

I-10. Civil Rights. The Association calls upon Americans to eliminate — by statute and practice — barriers of race, color, national origin, religion, philosophical beliefs, political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, size, marital status, and economic status that prevent some individuals, adult or juvenile, from exercising rights enjoyed by others, including liberties decreed in common law, the Constitution, and statutes of the United States.

I-12. Family Planning. The National Education Association supports family planning, including the right to reproductive freedom. The Association also urges

the implementation of community-operated, school-based family planning clinics that will provide intensive counseling by trained personnel.

I-17. Immigration. The Association opposes any immigration policy that denies human and/or civil rights or educational opportunities to immigrants and their children regardless of their immigration status.

I-26. Freedom of Religion. The Association opposes any federal legislation or mandate that would require school districts to schedule a moment of silence.

I-27. Gun-free Schools and the Regulation of Deadly Weapons. The Association believes that strict proscriptive regulations are necessary for the manufacture, importation, distribution, sale and resale of handguns and ammunition magazines.

I-39. Elimination of Discrimination. The National Education Association is committed to the elimination of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation/gender identification, and all other forms of discrimination. The Association believes that honest and open conversation is a precursor to change. The Association encourages its members and all other members of the educational community to engage in courageous conversations in order to examine assumptions, prejudices, discriminatory practices, and their effects.

I-43. Hate-Motivated Violence. The Association believes that federal, state, and local governments and community groups must oppose and eliminate hate-motivated violence.

I-46. English as the Official Language. The Association believes that efforts to legislate English as the official language disregard cultural pluralism; deprive those in need of education, social services, and employment; and must be challenged.

I-49. Equal Opportunity for Women. The Association supports an amendment to the U.S. Constitution (such as the Equal Rights Amendment) that guarantees that equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state because of gender. The Association also supports the enactment and full funding of the Women's Educational Equity Act.

The above text is excerpted from resolutions adopted at the 2002 NEA Convention. No words have been changed.

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